

Mindful Me

A **mentor's** guide to building girls' body confidence



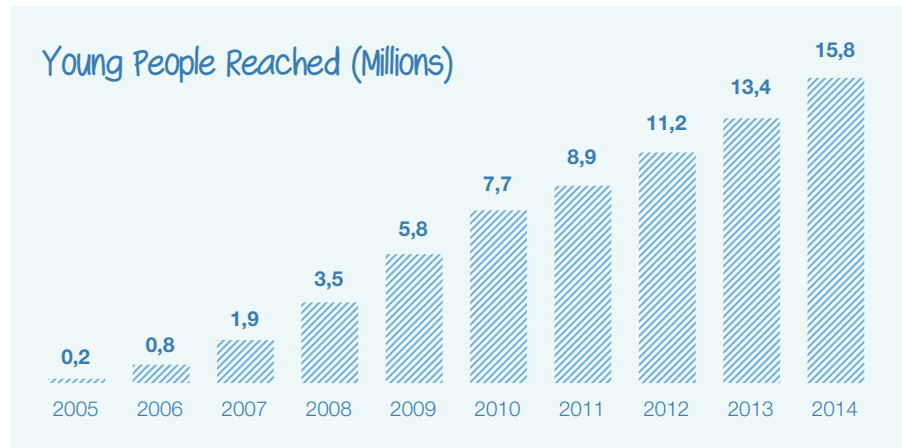


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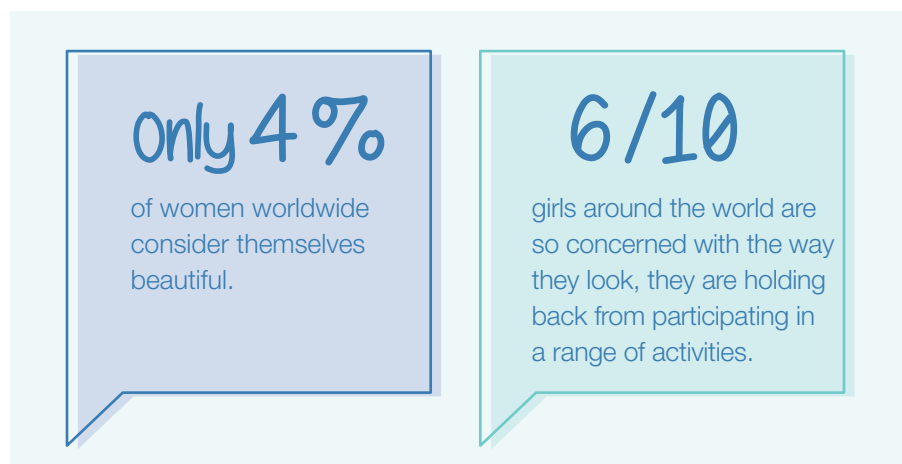
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We're on a Mission

At Dove, we're on a mission to encourage girls to think positively about the way they look, enabling them to reach their full potential. With the support of parents, teachers, mentors and youth organizations, we deliver self-esteem building programs and body confidence education to young people around the world. So far, we have reached more than 17 million young people. And together, we can help even more.



The pressure on girls to fit in with the ever-changing 'ideal' of beauty has a negative impact on their self-esteem, holding them back in life. Consider these important facts:



The activities that girls are avoiding are not trivial. They include trying out for a team or club, attending a doctor's appointment, sharing an opinion, engaging in classroom debate or even attending school at all. All of which are important for girls to build their confidence, express themselves and develop themselves as individuals and fulfil their personal potential.

Over 10 years ago, the Campaign for Real Beauty started a movement that challenged the beauty pressures felt by women and girls. Today, more than ever, we must take action together, to nurture and protect the body confidence and self-esteem of the women of tomorrow.

The Dove Self-Esteem Project

The Dove Self-Esteem Project was founded in 2004 to help ensure the next generation of women grow up to be happy and content, free from beauty stereotypes and self-doubt. The Project delivers self-esteem education through lessons in schools, workshops for youth groups, and online. Our programmes and fun interactive activities are purposely designed to help all girls overcome beauty related worries and barriers that can stop them from being happy and confident.

The Mindful Me activity guide, developed with psychologists, experts and pioneers in body image and girl development, helps girls build body confidence and self-esteem. The activities included focus on body awareness, mindfulness, self-kindness, empowerment, and positive emotions. This guide contains instructions on how to hold each activity, and also gives advice on some of the conversations that may follow.

With your support, more girls will take part, speak up and step forward, building their confidence to become their best selves. Thank you.

For more information and support visit

selfesteem.dove.ca



About Mindful Me

The aim of this guide is to help girls become more mindful and curious about their thoughts, feelings and the pressures they may experience about their body, their looks and growing up.

At this age, some girls may experience changes in self-esteem. *Self-esteem* is having confidence in yourself, your worth and your abilities. *Body confidence* is the way we think and feel about the way we look, and how we behave as a result. Helping a girl be mindful – without judging herself – is a way to help her have more belief in herself as she grows up, in body, mind and spirit.

Being mindful helps girls not to worry too much about past events or mistakes, or what the future holds. Instead, we want a girl to experience feelings, emotions, sensations, thoughts and events in an accepting way. We want her to celebrate the gifts she has – her qualities, talents, traits, and the quirks that make her unique – and appreciate how important she is to her family, friends and the larger world.

Getting Started

Before you begin reading this guide, take some time to sit quietly and reflect on the present moment. Become aware of your thoughts, feelings, and what's going on around you.

This is what it means to be mindful. It's simply a state of being aware in the present moment without judgment. Just noticing and being curious about yourself and your surroundings.

Now, think back to when you were growing up. It was probably a bewildering time. Perhaps your body was unruly, you were changing schools and you were setting out on a journey from childhood to adulthood. What was it like then? Did you feel good about your body or looks at that age? Do you feel different now? Which parts of your body do you now like the most? Write your thoughts in a notebook. The more you remember and know about yourself, the more you can be of help to your girl.

- ① Take time for yourself to prepare for this activity.
- ② Set aside 2 hours to complete these activities with your girl. There are seven of them and each will take approximately 15 minutes.
- ③ Choose a place and time where your girl will be most receptive to these activities, and when you won't be disturbed. These activities are interesting, creative and fun, and are intended to promote confidence, self-awareness and positive feelings.
- ④ Each activity is split into two parts. The first part includes an introduction and discussion points for you. The second part includes the introduction, instructions and activity to do with your girl.

How old is your girl?

The activities in this guide book are specifically designed for girls aged 11-14 years old, but can also be helpful for girls either younger or older than this.

Under 11 years



If your girl is younger than 11, select the activities you feel are most suited to her and disregard those you feel she may not be ready for yet.

Over 14 years



If your girl is older than 14, consider using the activity subject areas as topics to start a discussion with her.

Be sure to find a 'safe' starting point by discussing a self-esteem issue of a character or someone in a book, on television or in a film ("what might have been going on in her mind?"), before moving the conversation on to share your own or your girl's feelings. As you speak, reassure them that you're listening and open to discussion, not judgement.

Further Information

selfesteem.dove.ca



Everything on selfesteem.dove.ca is designed to help girls overcome beauty-related anxieties that stop them from being happy and confident. Explore, read, and join the conversations. Reassure your girl that if she has something in particular to talk about, she can ask you any time. You're here for her.



free-being-me.com

Free Being Me encourages girls and young women to celebrate their individuality and to challenge the myth of the 'perfect appearance' created by society. It has been created with our partner organization the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and is available for two age groups: one for groups of 7-10 year olds and one for groups of 11-14 year olds. Visit free-being-me.com for more information and to download the activity kits.

Thank You

We're thankful for the expert help of Dr Nancy Etcoff and Dr Tara Cousineau in the creation of this resource, Mindful Me.



This Is Me

Activity 1

This Is Me

About This Activity

In today's society, it's common for girls to talk negatively about themselves, particularly their appearance, as a way of expressing emotional upset. Sometimes when they're feeling sad or lonely or lacking in energy, girls express this as feeling 'fat' or 'ugly'. But neither fat nor ugly is a feeling, and speaking in this way focuses too much on looks instead of her emotions.

With this activity we want girls to focus on their unique traits and strengths, and to break down the barriers they may experience from peers, culture and self-comparison. It can also help them to talk openly and confidently about their appearance, and realize that they can use this inner strength in moments of frustration, disappointment or self-doubt.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
15 minutes

You'll need: a pen, a glue stick, scissors and a photo of your girl

Post Activity Discussion

Talk about the activity. How did she feel before she started?

Did she find it hard to answer the statements? How did she feel when she completed it?

Was there a change in how she felt about herself?

Share with her what you've learnt from some of the challenges you've faced.



Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 1

This Is Me

Introduction

It's common for girls to feel self-conscious about their looks, especially when they're talking about body shape and weight. Most of the pictures we see tell us that there's only one body shape that's beautiful, but that's not true. We need to remind ourselves that beauty not only comes in all shapes and sizes, it comes from inside us too. This inner and outer beauty is what makes us special and unique.

With this activity, we want you to write about yourself, your family and your talents, abilities and interests, but without talking about your looks. So when you have moments when you're unsure of yourself, just look at this page and remember all the things you enjoy and what you're proud of.

Instructions

- ① Find a photo you like of yourself and stick it to the frame at the top of the next page.
- ② We've started six statements. Read through each one carefully and fill in the blanks.



Next time you are feeling frustrated, disappointed or worried, look back at this activity and remind yourself how awesome you are!



I am unique in many ways.
These include...

3 things I enjoy doing:

①

②

③

3 things I am good at:

①

②

③

Things about my family and
culture I'm really proud of:

Dreams I have for my
future include:





Why I'm Fabulous

Activity 2

Why I'm Fabulous

About This Activity

In a world filled with images of 'perfect' looking people, it's common for girls at this age to become overly concerned with the way they look. They often compare themselves to others, and focus on their looks over other aspects of themselves. This can leave girls with negative emotions that can be hard to shake.

With this activity, we want girls to realize that by remembering the happy and precious moments in their lives – from the small, to the big and wonderful – they can get through even the toughest of times. The activity can also spark conversation on how it's normal to feel self-conscious and have moments of low self-esteem. Negative emotions shouldn't be ignored, but they shouldn't become her full focus.

Girls can use their creativity to appreciate and bring their unique qualities, interests and dreams to life. Like a vision board of happy times, girls can look back on these moments in times of need.

For older girls, maybe change up the activity a little (but keep the messages the same) to make an even bigger impact. For example, your girl could share her moments and positive feelings in a mixedmedia journal, or by collecting and uploading photos to an online pin-board or photo sharing network.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
20 minutes

You'll need: a pen, photograph of your girl, glue, cut out pictures from magazines, online or photographs (which may take some preparation time before your session. Or ask your girl to bring a magazine with her that can be cut up)

Post Activity Discussion

How did this activity make her feel? Does she now realize that when she's feeling low, there are still lots of things about herself she should celebrate?

Discuss ways of using this sheet in real life situations when she is feeling down.

Once she completed the activity, was there a change in how she felt about any negatives in her life?

Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem



Activity 2

Why I'm Fabulous

Introduction

We all have individual characteristics and traits that make us unique. With this activity, we want you to think about what makes you special and feel happy. Also consider what your friends and family value about you, and remember happy memories you may have shared with them.

Whenever you're feeling down, self-conscious or even when you want to appreciate the great things that bring you joy in life, just look at this collage.

Instructions

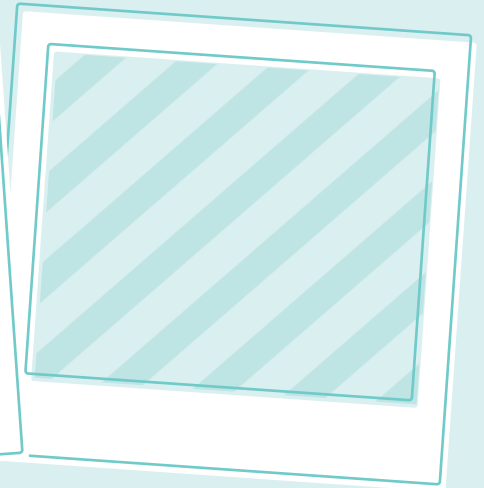
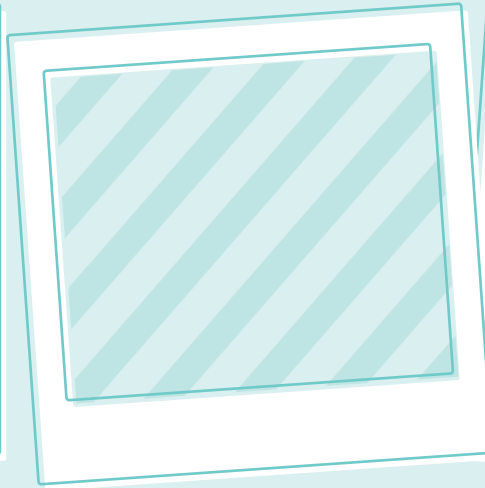
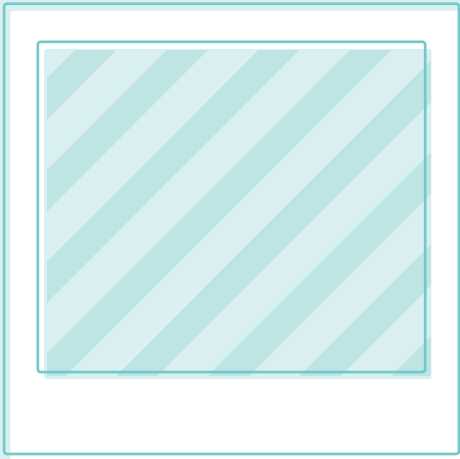


- ① Find a photo of yourself that you like and stick it in the centre of the next page.
- ② Think about the things you like about yourself and your life and surround the photo with pictures or words that show or describe them. Try to include images that remind you about things you like about your looks, personality, talents, dreams and life.
- ③ Include images that remind you of happy moments you want to always remember. Find pictures that represent each of these, either in magazines or online, and stick them onto the same page.
- ④ Now think about things your friends and family like about you and add these to your collage. What would your best friend say about you?
- ⑤ When you've finished and you're really happy with what you've created, share the finished product with your friends to inspire them to see the beauty in themselves.
- ⑥ Show it to your mentor and ask her what she thinks of it. Maybe you can make one for her together?



Share the love!

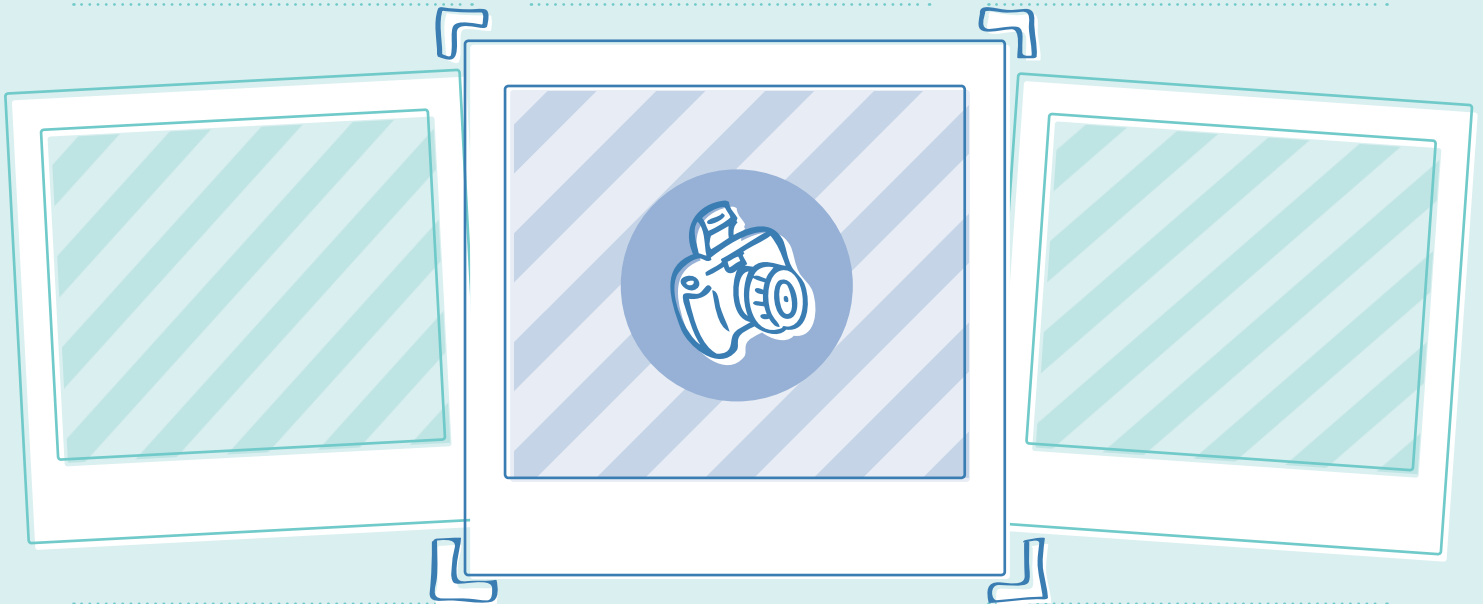
You can also use this activity the next time you think one of your friends is worried about the way they look. It's a great way to tell them why you like hanging out with them and will remind them (and you) that looks aren't the only things we value in our friends!



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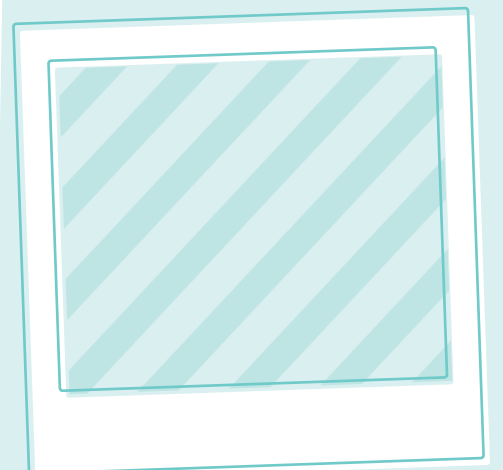
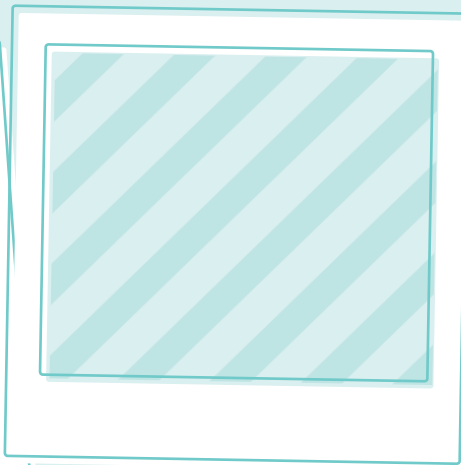
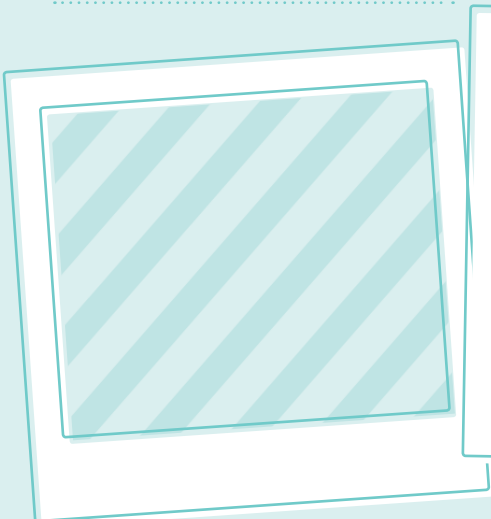


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Why I'm Fabulous

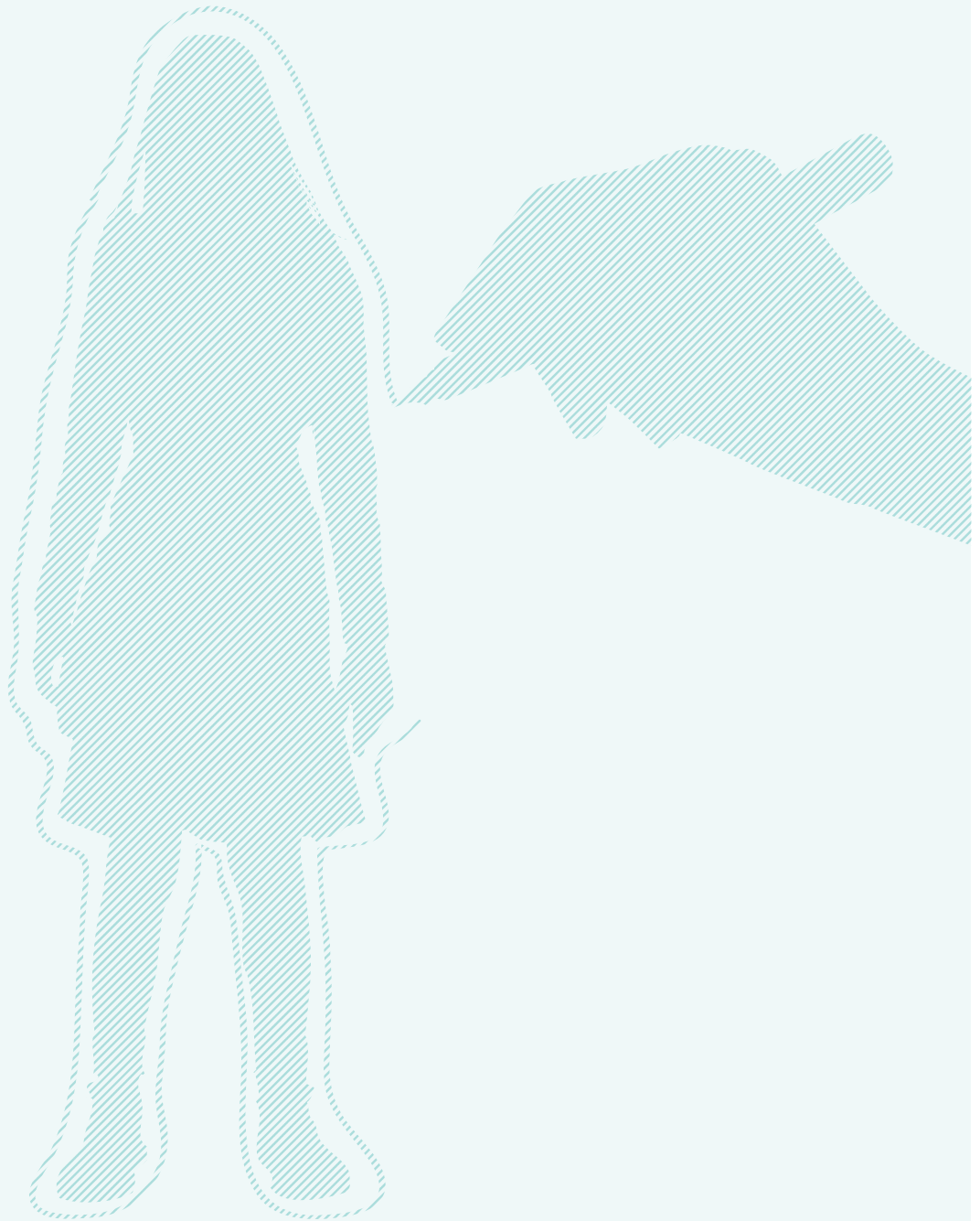


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My Brilliant Body

Activity 3

My Brilliant Body

About This Activity

The way a girl thinks she looks is often one of the strongest sources of self-criticism and self-doubt. This activity encourages girls to consider and appreciate all the wonderful things their bodies can do (e.g. run, walk, talk, dance, etc.) and the actions it carries out (e.g. the cardiovascular, digestive and respiratory systems). The human body is amazing. By helping girls accept themselves for who they are and become proud of what they do, we help them avoid defining their identities and valuing themselves based on the way they think they look.

With this activity, we want girls to accept themselves for who they are and appreciate both the physical abilities and emotional signals that the body gives.

Some girls can find it difficult to explain what they love about their body. If your girl is in this situation, try asking her to imagine how it would feel if she loved every part of her body. This approach can often help overcome this hurdle.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
15 minutes

You'll need: a pen, sticky notes

Post Activity Discussion

How did she feel before she started this activity? Was it hard to talk about what she appreciates about her body?

Did she find it hard to accept that she didn't need to be perfect or know everything? How did she feel when she completed it?

Once the task had been completed, was there a change in how she felt about herself?



Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 3

My Brilliant Body

Introduction

Our bodies are amazing. No matter what their size, shape, colour, physical ability or quirkiness is, they are a powerful part of us that allow us to do and achieve things every day.

Everyone has a body that is special to her, different to all others. Thinking about the things they allow us to do and achieve, will help us appreciate just how incredible we are, way beyond how we look.

As well as the physical things, our bodies also have an unbelievable emotional radar system. Have you heard the expression 'gut feeling'? That's the sensation you have in your belly when you have a hunch about something. Or that feeling in your heart when you're excited, happy or even sad. Even think of when you last blushed or sweated when you were embarrassed.

Knowing your body's unique reactions to stress or upset can help you figure out how to respond to these feelings in future. For example, you may need to take some deep breaths, take a walk, call a friend for support, or get some rest. Listen to your body!

Instructions

- ① Draw an outline of your body in the space provided. Don't forget to draw your face!
- ② Now think about the parts of your body. Next to each, list the things it helps you do. For example, your legs help you to run and your lips help you to speak.
- ③ Think about the way your body reacts to feelings. In a different colour, write down where on your body you experience feelings - like happiness, contentment, anger, fear, sadness, love and surprise.
- ④ In the space below, write a poem or a love letter to your body. Be sure to include why it's so wonderful, how it gives you important signals about your emotions, and all the reasons you love it.

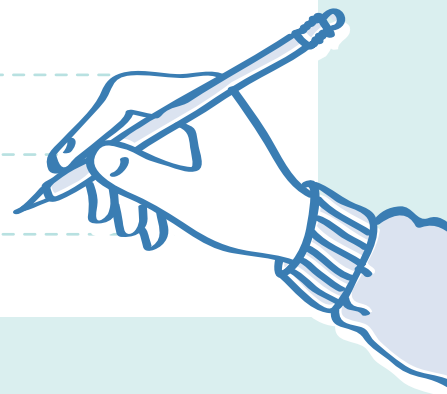


Next time you find yourself criticizing your body, remind yourself about all the great things it allows you to do.



Dear Body

A series of horizontal dashed lines for writing a letter to the body.





Mindful Eating

Activity 4

Mindful Eating

About This Activity

Mindless eating, eating without thinking, is very common. Whether it's grabbing something quick on the go, eating in front of the TV or at your desk, people have stopped noticing their food. It has become a function or a necessity, instead of something to enjoy.

Mindless eating may also lead to overeating as people don't always realize when they're full, and continue eating for the sake of it. 'Comfort eating' is another growing issue, with many turning to food when they feel down, anxious or nervous. When experiencing these feelings, some have the habit of claiming that they 'feel fat'. However fat isn't an emotion, and feelings and food should never be connected like this.

On the other hand, being aware of the physical sensations in the body and the physical sensations of food is mindful eating. Savouring food - taking in the flavours, textures, and aromas in all of the senses means you're aware of when food is enjoyable or not, and when you've had enough to eat.

By helping your girl identify how she experiences hunger and satisfaction for herself, both physically and emotionally, you'll be helping her develop a lifelong positive relationship with food.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
15 minutes

You'll need: a raisin (note if your girl does not like raisins, you can use another small piece of fruit or a nut)

Post Activity Discussion

Discuss normal eating routines, are they rushed and mindless or deliberate and thoughtful?

Did she enjoy eating more when she was conscious of every sensation? What differences, if any, did she notice?



Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 4

Mindful Eating

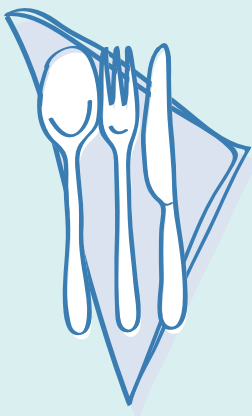
Introduction

Eating is normal and necessary for everyone, everyday. Food gives us the energy and nourishment we need to grow, be active and be healthy. It also gives us enjoyment in the way it looks, tastes, smells, sounds, and feels in our mouths.

Food also plays a huge role in many cultural and social celebrations that make us feel good. As we often associate good memories with eating, when we feel down, it can be tempting to turn to food to make us feel better. However, instead of doing this, we can find other ways of dealing with our emotions. The best way to start is by getting to know ourselves better and learning to love who we are. Experiencing our food for the nourishment it offers and allowing ourselves to simply feel our emotions, will allow us to deal with the feeling we have more confidently.

Instructions

This activity is to help you become more mindful when eating. That means savouring food you're eating and listening to what your body wants (am I hungry/full?).



- ① Wash your hands before you start. Take a raisin out of a box and place it in your hand, feel the weight of it. What does it feel like in your hand?
- ② As you look, become aware of what you see. Describe out loud the shape, size, colour, texture. Where did this raisin come from? What journey has it been on from being a seed on a farm?
- ③ Bring the raisin up to your nose and smell it, inhale deeply. What does it smell like? What does its smell remind you of? Does it bring any memories?
- ④ Put the raisin in your mouth. Notice how it tastes and how it feels in your mouth i.e. is it sweet or sour? Soft or hard? What else do you taste or feel?
- ⑤ Bite into the raisin. What do you notice? Did it make a sound as you bit into it? Has the texture of it changed?
- ⑥ Slowly chew the raisin and feel it breaking down inside your mouth. Describe the texture and flavour of the raisin. Notice how it feels when you swallow it.
- ⑦ What have you learned from this exercise?



Next time you eat a meal or a snack, try this exercise again. Really experience the food and make a mental note of the sensations of the food as well as how it makes you feel.

Look



Smell



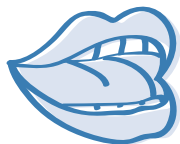
Sound



Texture



Taste



Other





Mini-Meditations

Activity 5

Mini-Meditation

About This Activity

Being kind to yourself and others can help you to overcome feelings of self-doubt, and to be strong against pressures to be 'perfect'. If you sometimes avoid activities because you don't feel good about the way you look, it can help push those negative thoughts out of your head.

Self-kindness is key in helping girls to stop criticizing themselves at times when they feel inadequate or judged. It's not possible to be flawless or mistake-free all the time, and girls need to realize and accept this. It will also help them to relate their experiences (high and low) to others, letting them see that they're not alone. This will lead to a lot less stress and upset, and help girls build empathy and develop strong personal relationships.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
15 minutes

You'll need: a quiet place and a calm voice

Post Activity Discussion

Talk through why it's important to be able to let go of negative feelings towards herself.

How did she feel when she showed herself self-kindness? Was it difficult or easy to be genuinely kind to herself?



Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 5

Mini-Meditation

Introduction

Self-kindness teaches us how to treat ourselves in a gentle, loving way, just like we would a friend. This means that when things don't go to plan, we're nicer to ourselves, instead of being critical. To do this, it's helpful to find some alone time to relax and chill, and focus on being kind toward yourself.

Ask your mentor to read the words inside the clouds aloud to you.

1

Find a comfortable position sitting or lying down. Let your eyes close gently or focus on a spot in front of you. Let your breathing happen naturally.



2

Slowly begin to pay attention to your breathing. Notice the rhythm of your inhale as you breathe in and the exhale as you breathe out. Begin to slow it down a bit. As you breathe in you can count slowly:

1... 2... 3... 4...

As you breathe out count down, 4... 3... 2... 1...
Do this for a few breaths.

3

If you find your mind wandering or focusing on worries, fears or nagging thoughts, that's okay, this happens to everyone. Simply bring your attention back to your breath and notice the gentle movement of the rise and fall of your chest.

4

Begin to notice any physical sensations or areas of tension that you might be feeling in your body.... perhaps in your jaw, your neck or your belly. Simply focus your attention on those areas of tension as you breathe in and breathe out, slowly feeling the relief that your breath offers.

5

Now gently place your right hand over your heart; take your left hand and place it over your right hand.

6



As you feel your hands on your heart, imagine that you're holding a favourite pet or stuffed animal or a sleeping baby. Be open to the tender feelings that may arise. Notice if the tension in your body begins to lessen, or any unkind or nagging thoughts start to disappear.

7

As you experience these warm and tender feelings, you may tell yourself these words:

I am unique, I am worthy, May I be kind to myself, May I be kind to others, May I feel at peace.

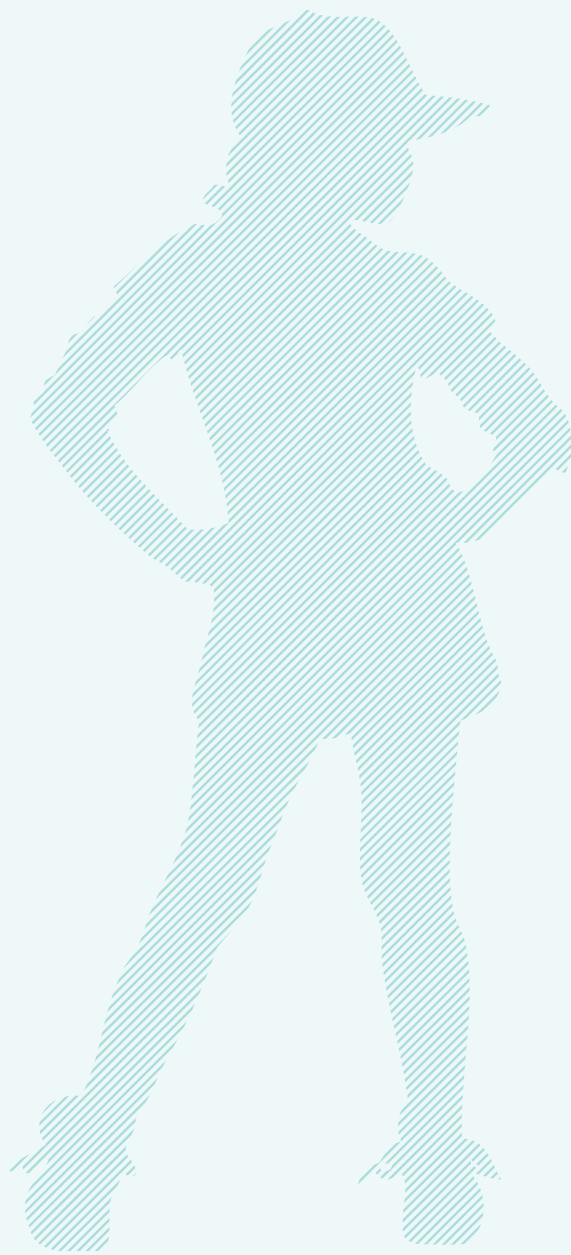
Whenever you notice your mind wandering come back to these loving and kind sayings.

8

Take a few breaths in and out at your own pace, and when you're ready you can gently open your eyes and begin to pay attention to the world around you.



Next time you feel that your life is getting too full of pressure or too complicated, know that you can always focus on your breathing and place your hands on your heart. Just tell yourself everything will be okay. It's a way to show yourself some love and care.



Power Poses

Activity 6

Power Poses

About This Activity

Research shows that our posture and the way we hold our bodies can affect how confident we feel and how anxious we can become. Standing strong and looking powerful – even when we don't feel like it on the inside - can release confidence-producing hormones that lower anxiety levels. It shows the world that you're feeling open and self-assured.

Practising strong and positive body language can help build a girl's confidence, and prepare her to stand tall when challenging situations arise such as public speaking or class presentations.

This activity helps girls connect their bodies with their thoughts and feelings, helping them build confidence to engage fully in activities that help them reach their full potential.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
15 minutes

You'll need: a pen and a quiet place

Post Activity Discussion

Ask her to demonstrate typical body language she would do if she was feeling anxious, sad, insecure (e.g. slumped shoulders, making her body small by folding her arms and legs like a pretzel).

How did she feel once she practiced a powerful pose in response to the same feelings?



Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 6

Power Poses

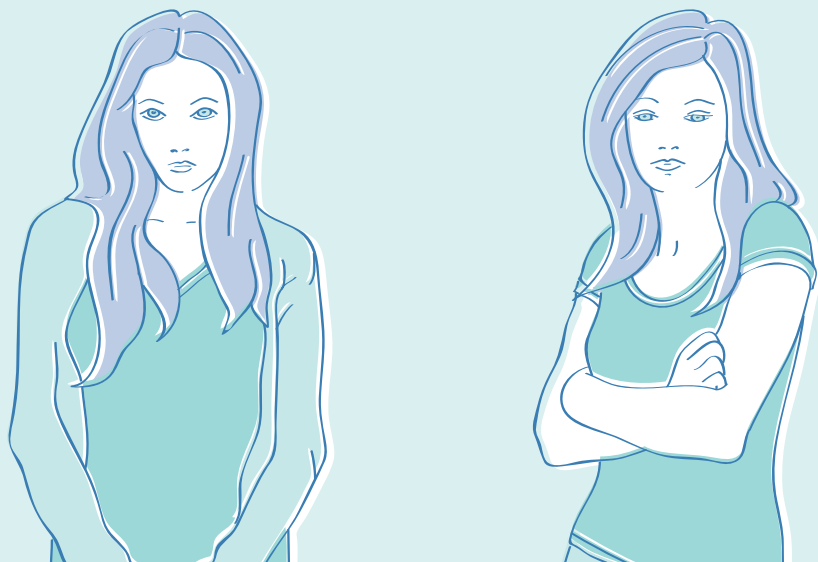
Introduction

A person's body language says a lot about them. People can look more confident or less confident by changing how they stand, sit, move and take up space. Let's look further.

How do people with lots of confidence look?



How do people with less confidence look?



Did you know you can use body language to trick your mind into feeling more confident? The way we hold and position our bodies can impact the way we feel on the inside. Sometimes, even when we don't feel great on the inside, we can make ourselves feel stronger if we make ourselves look more confident on the outside.

①

Choose one of the two strong, confident poses opposite.



②

Strike that pose and hold it for two minutes. You may feel a bit silly but really go for it! The more you really commit to the pose, the more you will feel the difference.

③

Did you notice a change in how you felt before and after this exercise?
Write down what you noticed about your feelings



Next time you're in a situation where you need to feel confident, try striking one of these poses for a couple of minutes in private beforehand. It might help give you the boost you need!



Gratitude Letter

Activity 7

Gratitude Letter

About This Activity

Whether it's face-to-face or written, saying thank you is a simple, but effective way of showing your appreciation to someone. It leads to positive emotions, helping girls feel confident inside and out. It makes them aware of how much others value them and do for them. It allows them to put a spotlight on all the good things that they may forget, take for granted or just not reward openly with a thank you.

If there's someone in particular to whom your girl owes thanks to, help her express her appreciation. Some people find it uplifting to write gratitude letters to people they don't actually know personally, but who have made a positive impact on their lives. It may be a singer, author, athlete or a person in the news who has demonstrated kindness, courage or confidence.

Instructions



This activity will take approximately
15 minutes

You'll need: a pen, a piece of paper and an envelope

Post Activity Discussion

Discuss who has influenced your girl's life in a positive way and why?
What specific moment/s stand out and why?

How has she used what she learnt from them in a positive way?

Discuss how she can focus on gratitude in other areas of her life on a daily basis.



Go to selfesteem.dove.ca for more information and tips to help build body confidence and self-esteem.

Activity 7

Gratitude Letter

Introduction

When someone does something nice for you, or has made you feel good about yourself, it's always great for you, and them, to say thank you. Whether it's face-to-face or by letter, it lets the receiver know that you're grateful for their help and support.

Instructions

On a blank page, write a letter to someone that you feel has made a positive impact on your life, thanking them for the ways in which they've inspired you.



You may want to write it to a:

- Friend
- Relative
- Teacher
- Sports coach
- Role model
- Someone else



Be sure to include things like:

- What she/he has done for you
- What positive impact they've had on your life and why
- Any specific events that stand out
- How often you remember her/his efforts
- How they helped you to overcome a barrier/problem you've faced
- Why you admire them
- How you've used what you've learnt from them in a positive way
- Anything else you feel is appropriate



If possible, deliver it in person, but if not, you can email or post it.

How did writing this letter make you feel?

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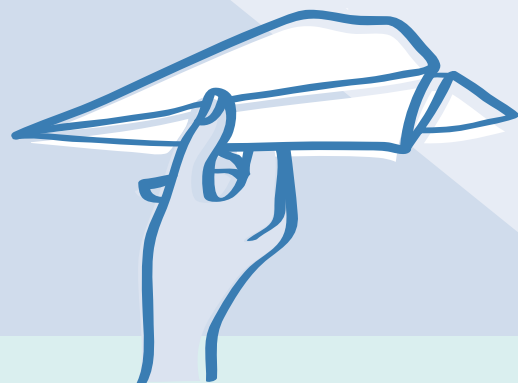
Dear [Name],

I am [inspired, grateful, thankful] when I think about the time you [describe situation]. You're a [courageous, thoughtful etc.] person and such a great role model for me.

When I [saw/remember/think] about what you [did/said], it makes me feel [a positive feeling].

I will always remember when you [describe a detail of situation or event or words]. It made me feel better about myself, making me want to be a good role model for others. It also made me realize how important it is to be kind, and to pass that kindness to others.

Thank you so much,
[Signature]



Dove
self-esteem
project

